

## Sadbhavna Sammelan in Uttarakhand

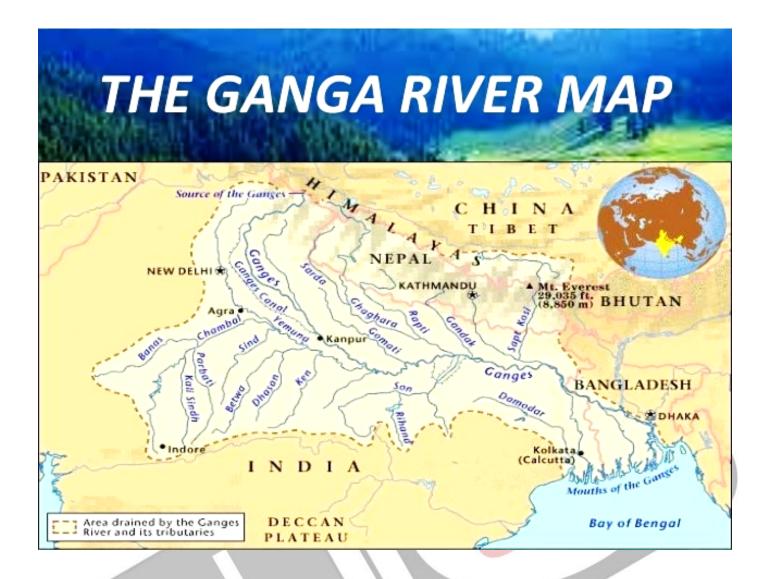
## Why in News?

Recently, on the left bank of 'Har Ki Paudi' in Haridwar, Uttarakhand tourism minister organised a two-day 'Sadbhavna Sammelan'.

 Thousands of people assembled for the conclave in which the minister spoke on spirituality and importance of the Ganga for Hindus.

## **Key Points**

- Flowing for over 2,600 km across northern and eastern India, the Ganga is considered a goddess and a focus of religious devotion for Hindus.
  - The river is source of drinking water for more than 40% of India's 1.4 billion population living in the <u>Gangetic river basin</u> spread across six states and a union territory between Uttarakhand and West Bengal.
- According to <u>Jal Shakti ministry</u> data, around three million litres of sewage is emptied into the Ganga everyday and only about half of that is treated.
  - In the holy city of Varanasi alone, it is estimated that 4,000 bodies are burnt on the banks of the river everyday.
  - Dams in Uttarakhand block the river flow, turning the river into a stream at several places during the summer months.
  - The hydropower projects in the state are mostly run of the river (ROR), except the <u>Tehri</u>
    <u>Dam Project</u>, which is a storage project for hydropower development and augments the
    non-monsoon river flows.
  - According to the <u>Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB)</u>, testing of samples from 59 of the 97 water quality monitoring stations along the river the **faecal coliform** in the river was above the permissible level at 70% of the locations in January 2023.
    - Faecal coliform is a group of bacteria found in the gut and faeces of warmblooded animals and its contamination indicates presence of human faecal matter.
- In 2024, the **Namami Gange scheme**, a diverse set of interventions to clean and rejuvenate the river, reduced the "pollution load" in the river.
- The polluted river stretches were being rejuvenated through approved action plans to achieve the target of outdoor bathing criteria as notified by the environment ministry.



## **Namami Gange Programme**

- It is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as a 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
- It is being operated under the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The program is being implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and its state counterpart organizations i.e State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).
- In phase 2 of Namami Gange Programme (2021-26), the states will focus on expeditious completion of projects and preparation of bankable Detailed Project Report (DPR) for projects in Ganga tributary towns, cutting down delays.
  - Focus is also being given to the revival of small rivers and wetlands. For the future, each Ganga district is to develop scientific plans and health cards for at least 10 wetlands and adopt policies for reuse of treated water and other by-products.